



**CAMPAIGN
FOR
REAL ALE**

Opening Times



Huntingdonshire Branch of CAMRA

Issue 157

The Campaign for Real Ale

Winter 2013/2014



Booze on the Ouse

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Chairman's Chatter



Hello and a very warm welcome to the latest issue of Opening Times, the branch magazine for Huntingdonshire CAMRA. As

the year draws to a close, it's a good time to look back on some of the events we organised and what we achieved both locally and nationally.

The first big local event of 2013 was the St Neots 'Booze on the Ouse' Beer and Cider Festival in March where we sold more than 65 different real ales, plus ciders, perryies and bottled beers. A great success and we'll be back at the Priory Centre from 13-15 March 2014.

Soon after this came what for me was one of those JFK moments; you can always remember where you were when you first heard! George Osborne announced the scrapping of the beer duty escalator in his budget and for good measure also took a penny off the price of a pint. This was a triumph for those in CAMRA and the pub industry who had taken part in a sustained campaign over the previous year. And where was I when I heard? Well I was over in the States having breakfast in Buddy's Diner, Somerville, MA, whilst attending the New England Real Ale Exhibition. A fine breakfast it was too and the American cask ale gets better every year!

April saw the first of our popular campaigning coach trips, which are free for CAMRA members – a great reason to join. We visited pubs to the west of the branch area to celebrate Community Pubs month. In the same month, we held our branch AGM at the Black Bull in Brampton, whilst in May we held a Mild Month Social in St Neots.

Another coach trip in July took us over the branch boundary to visit the Nene Valley

Brewery in Oundle, together with local pubs there and on the way back. A well-attended and appreciated Pub History Walk around St Ives followed in August. This month also saw the Great British Beer Festival (GBBF) at Olympia in London, where many volunteers from the Huntingdonshire branch worked to quench the thirst of thousands of customers and keep them entertained. For the first time, I was invited to take part in a round of judging for the Champion Beer of Britain. Sadly I didn't get to judge the eventual winner (Elland's 1872 Porter – see page 9), but this was a great experience and one I hope to repeat in future years.

Our second 'Booze on the Ouse' Beer and Cider Festival of the year took place in St Ives in September. This was again very successful with more than 1,400 customers attending over the three days and drinking more than 4,300 pints of real ale. Also in September, CAMRA's new online pub guide WhatPub was launched (see page 8). This guide not only gives information about most pubs in the country, but also allows CAMRA members to submit quality scores for their real ales.

To honour Cask Ale Week, our third coach trip of the year was held in October and took us to pubs in the north and east of the branch area. This was an enjoyable afternoon with some great ales on offer.

I hope this has given you a taste of the events and campaigns that CAMRA organises. Details of forthcoming local events are shown on page 15 and please visit our website for up to date information. It would be great to see you at one of these events.

Best wishes to you and yours for Christmas and the New Year.

Cheers, until next time
Richard



WHAT?PUB

Launched in Sept / Oct 2013

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Information updated by thousands of CAMRA volunteers

Created by CAMRA who produce the UK's best beer & pub guide

1234

whatpub.com

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WhatPub

Any regular internet surfer will be well aware that there are numerous websites purporting to give information about pubs. The likes of 'Beer in the evening,' 'UK pub finder' and their ilk will be familiar – as will their manifest limitations.

So often, trying to find details of a specific pub using one of these will bring up just a generalised webpage, surrounded by unwanted advertisements and with little more than the pub name accompanied by requests for information or reviews.

With our 200-plus branches covering the entire nation and with over 150,000 members (dedicated pub users!) feeding in information, CAMRA has, collectively, an unparalleled amount of data on the UK's pub estate. It behoves us to use this information for the general good and to this end, at the end of September, CAMRA launched its own searchable database on the website:

www.whatpub.com, as a service to the general public. With much more detail than any of the previous rivals it also has the tremendous advantage that its currency is constantly updated as its data is drawn from the distributed databases of our many branches on a day-to-day basis.

The database is searchable in a variety of ways: by pub name (good if it is a one-off but not so useful if it is, say, a Red Lion or a King's Head!), by location (by name or full or part post code) and then by over twenty features and facilities such as 'locally-brewed beers' or 'dog-friendly.' Of course, being a CAMRA site, all the real ales are featured.

One especially important feature, almost always omitted on other websites, is that every pub entry has a date on which the details were last updated. A quite unusual search item, absent in all other sites, is the inclusion of a 'closed' term allowing users to undertake their own historical research.



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Opening Times 157

UK's Best Selling Beer & Pub Guide

CAMRA's GOOD BEER GUIDE



2014



Edited by Roger Protz

Published in mid-September, the latest national guide is now available in the shops or by post (see: www.camra.org.uk).

Britain now has an incredible 1147 breweries, an increase of 187 in the last year alone, these are comprehensively listed in the **CAMRA Good Beer Guide 2014**. As CAMRA's flagship title, the Guide features over 4,500 urban and rural pubs, giving details of the real ales, food, opening hours, beer gardens, accommodation, transport links, disabled access and family facilities of each one plus a short description by the CAMRA surveyor.

The Guide, compiled by CAMRA's 150,000 members, is completely independent, and there is no charge for entry. Updated and revised each year, it is guaranteed to be the most up to date guide to Britain's best real ale pubs.

Winter 2013/2014

A Look Back In Time

10 YEARS AGO

A new 'Big Two' was created in the pubs business as Punch Taverns bought out Pubmaster for £1.2billion to briefly become the UK's biggest pub operator with 7,300 pubs, after 200 pub disposals to satisfy the competition authorities. Meanwhile, Enterprise Inns had agreed to purchase the 4,100-strong Unique Pub Company and would overtake Punch to become the largest, with well over 9,000 pubs - this was due for completion in April 2004. CAMRA warned that consumers were now threatened with 'a new monopoly just as harmful as the Big Six brewers' monopoly that had been dismantled by the government's Beer Orders'.

Enterprise Inns was keen to point out, however, that real ale sales had rocketed from 2% to 13% of total beer sales in the 837 former managed houses it had bought from national brewers Whitbread and Scottish & Newcastle in 2001. These pubs had been converted to tenancies under Enterprise Inns, and its tenants now had a choice of 100 real ales through its suppliers Scottish Courage and Interbrew, and a wider selection for those tenants who were members of Enterprise's Specialist Cask Ale scheme.



Microbrewers were celebrating a new contract with Unique Pub Company for the Society of Independent Brewers (SIBA), which would allow Unique lessees to buy real ales

direct from local SIBA members, potentially giving small brewers direct access to over 4,000 pubs.

CAMRA celebrated what then seemed an astronomical record membership of 70,000; in August 2013 CAMRA membership

reached 150,000.

Huntingdonshire CAMRA held its winter meetings at the Grange, Brampton, the



Oliver Cromwell in St Ives and the Rivermill at Eaton Socon. There were walks around the pubs of Hun-

tingdon and Eaton Socon starting at the Market Tavern and Bell respectively and in January 2004 there was a rail trip to Salisbury.



Bristol brewery Smiles was sold for 1.1 million to City Centre Breweries following a five-year period of losses. Formed in 1978, Smiles had had a troubled history and sold its chain of pubs to Youngs of Wandsworth,

London.

Youngs' historic 20-acre brewing site faced the threat of redevelopment as its chairman John Young revealed that it was in discussion with Wandsworth Borough Council in a plan for redevelopment of the area occupied by the brewery, claimed to be Britain's oldest with evidence of brewing on the site since 1581.



A Look Back In Time

25 YEARS AGO

CAMRA said 'Oz off' to Australian brewers Elders IXL, owners of the Fosters lager brand and the UK's Courage brewing group, after Elders announced a £1.6 billion takeover bid for Scottish and Newcastle breweries. CAMRA was supporting demands for the bid to be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, but feared that if the bid failed, an alternative bid by Elders for another major UK brewer, Greenall Whitley, would be likely.

Meanwhile the Harp lager group, jointly owned by Guinness and Greene King, bought a majority shareholding in the South Wales brewer Buckleys, which had been put up for sale following the collapse of the Barlow Clowes finance group. Buckleys had been bought the previous year by Peter Clowes, the man behind the group, and his partner Guy von Cramer. Harp planned to include Buckleys in a joint business with its South Wales Clubs brewery, Crown Brewery. CAMRA was concerned for the future of both breweries now under Harp's control, as well as the revered family brewing company Felinfoel of Llanelli, which had been 49% owned by Buckley for 20 years – this shareholding having now passed to Harp.

Another takeover and a sequence of events of major significance to the future of the UK pubs industry were also starting to unfold, contributing to the development of a group that would eventually grow to become the Punch Taverns pubs empire. At the end of 1988, the Brent Walker property and leisure

group, owned by former heavyweight boxers George and Billy Walker, bought **Tolly Cobbold** and Cameron's breweries and their 855 pubs for £239 million from David and

Frederick Barclay. The Barclay brothers had taken control of the two brewers in the early 1980's when they bought their owners, the Ellerman Lines shipping business. In 1988, Brent Walker had already become major players in the UK pubs business by buying a large number of the pubs that national brewers Watneys had been forced to sell off by the Beer Orders, the government's response to an investigation into competition in the UK brewing industry by its Monopolies and Mergers Commission.

St Neots CAMRA's November pub crawl in St Neots started at the **Queen Victoria** and ended at the Wheatsheaf. The Mad Cat at Pidley and Three Horseshoes, Wistow were visited later that month.



Three Horseshoes, Wistow

In December there was a 'double pub social' at the Waggon and Horses then the Old Sun in Eaton Socon. The branch started the new year of 1989 with a visit to the Tudor, Fenstanton and the Prince of Wales at Hilton and the January branch meeting was at the Royal Oak in Hail Weston.



Old Sun in Eaton Socon



Half Pints

The government is preparing to report on a consultation concerning its proposed statutory code of conduct for pub leases, but pub companies have already reacted strongly against the proposals. Punch Taverns has accused the government of bias and said that the proposals would deprive companies of revenue streams, in breach of their human rights as property owners. Enterprise Inns has complained that the government has refused to meet companies to discuss the proposals.



Production of Truman's ales has restarted in East London. James Morgan has revived the famous old brewing name, built a new

£1million brewery and launched a range of cask beers brewed with the original Truman's yeast strain. The first beers to appear were Truman's Runner, a best bitter, and Truman's Swift, a golden ale.

In the latest of a series of CAMRA campaigns to raise the profile of pub-going, October's 'Pubs in Our Lives' promotion highlighted the varied roles of pubs in community life. CAMRA commissioned new research to show that pubs had been used by 75% of people to celebrate birthdays, 48% to celebrate a life at a wake and 36% to wet a baby's head. 20 % of people had met their current partner in a pub.



WhatPub, a comprehensive online guide to 96 per cent of pubs serving real ale, has gone live. The site provides details of more than 35,800 pubs serving real ale and an additional 10,000 pubs not serving real ale are included

in the database.

A total of 22 'micropubs' are now listed on the Micropub Association's website and many more are planned.



Martyn Hillier opened the country's first micropub, the Butcher's Arms, Herne, Kent in November 2005 and

addressed CAMRA's annual conference in Eastbourne in 2009 about his new concept. The 2003 Licensing Act made it surprisingly easy to secure new on-licences and the concept is simple – the premises are small with low overheads, and into the mix is thrown good conversation and real ale. The Butcher's has seating for 12 people in a space about three metres square.



Last year, the Bank in Willingham became Cambridge-shire's first micropub, opened by Linda and

Chris Warren in a former Lloyds bank.



Another local micropub to hit the headlines is the Railway Arms on Downham Market railway station,

recently named CAMRA's national Cider and Perry Pub of the Year.

Nationally, at least six more have opened during 2013. Information on how to set up your own micropub can be found at www.micropub.co.uk



Half Pints



Findings of new research published in the latest annual Cask Report confirm that real cask ale continues to grow in importance for pubs. In 2012, cask ale out-performed the total beer market by 6.8%. Even though the total beer market declined by 7.9%, volumes of real ale dipped by just 1.1%, and the long-term trend for cask remains one of steady improvement, says the report's author Pete Brown. According to Brown, a major appeal of cask to both drinkers and publicans is its variety: 'The optimum cask range is a mix of style, colour, ABV and provenance, and should be rotated on an on-going basis. Consumers also want guest ales to stay on the bar for longer than licensees currently keep them, and want a core of familiar brands as well as new and different beers,' says Brown.

Elland Brewery's 1872 Porter was crowned Champion Beer of Britain at CAMRA's Great British Beer Festival at London Olympia in August. 1872's route to the final began last year when it won its regional heat for porters and went on to be judged Supreme Champion Winter

Beer of Britain 2013 at CAMRA's National Winter Ales Festival in Manchester. At the beginning of the year, head brewer Michael Wynnyczuk started his new job at Elland and his first brew was the batch of 1872 Porter that went on to win the Champion Winter Beer award. Michael had stepped into shoes left by Dave Sanders, former head brewer at Elland. Elland brewery director Dickie Bird is keen to give Dave credit for the awards: 'Dave resurrected the original 1872 recipe and modernised it for

modern brew kit and I'd really like to make sure he gets credit for this win', said Dickie.

The Government's Planning Inspectorate has given the green light to a new planning policy which gives the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea powers to stop pubs being converted to residential use 'where they make an important contribution to the community'. Cabinet Member for Planning Policy, Councillor Timothy Coleridge said: 'Despite the economic downturn, residential land values in Kensington and Chelsea can command huge sums of money and out-compete any other use. This policy seeks to protect those uses that have lower land values, but remain of high value'.



Kent based family brewing company Shepherd Neame has added Whitstable Bay Blonde Lager (4.5% ABV) and Whitstable Bay Pale Ale (ABV 4%) to its Whitstable Bay range, and is set to follow these up with a black lager.

The residents of Rockland All Saints, a village in Norfolk, hope they will soon own their own pub. A group of locals has set up a community interest company and issued a prospectus to raise the



£250,000 needed to buy the last pub in the village, the White Hart, which is currently closed. Director Ian Scholes said: 'We've set up an Industrial and Provident Society (IPS) following Plunkett Model rules and will issue a prospectus for potential investors.' The pub will be free of tie to any brewery, and operated by a tenant.

Half Pints

Residents of Letchmore Heath in Hertfordshire could be pulling their own pints. The 400-year-old Three Horse-shoes was listed as an



'asset of community value' by Hertsmere Borough Council after its nomination by Aldenham Parish Council. Hertsmere Councillor Dr Harvey Cohen said: 'The "Community Right to Bid" legislation was brought in to help communities faced with losing their local amenities or buildings that are important to them. We agreed to list the Three Horseshoes because it is important for the social wellbeing and recreational interests of the village. It doesn't mean the pub will be sold to the community, but it does mean the community gets the chance to prepare a proposal and raise the funds to put in an offer.'

The council says the pub now cannot be sold before 10 December 2013 except to a community interest group.

Wandsworth Council has added the Wheat-sheaf at Tooting Bec to its list of 'assets of community value'. This is the first pub to achieve this status in Tooting and the 101st in the country. Registration brings the community the right to bid for the Wheatsheaf, in order to prevent its loss to the community as a pub.



Greene King is opening a new 'innovation brewhouse' at its Bury St Edmunds brewing site. Greene

King plans to use the new brewery to experiment, develop and showcase new products.



The UK's oldest hop variety, East Kent Goldings, has become the first UK hop to be awarded 'Protected Designation of Origin' status by the European Commission,

recognising the links of the hop to the county of Kent. Food and Farming Minister David Heath said: 'It's great to see a hop join the growing number of British products whose traditions and ties with their local area are being recognised. The "Protected Food Names" scheme provides farmers and producers with a way of adding value to their product, while helping consumers to identify foods with a clear regional provenance. East Kent Goldings is descended from the Canterbury Whitebine hop and was first identified by a member of the Golding family around 1790.'



Hartlepool brewer Camerons has unveiled a new corporate logo and two new beers. Gold Bullion (ABV 4.3 %)

and IPA (ABV 3.8 %) will sit alongside the company's Strongarm and Castle Eden Ale. Camerons head brewer Martin Dutoy said: 'We have spent the last six months trialling a range of new beers using new hop and malt varieties to achieve two fantastic new cask ales. Camerons IPA is modern style session ale, pale straw in colour with a good hop flavour from a late copper addition of Styrian Goldings. Gold Bullion is a pure gold coloured ale, full bodied with good hop flavour achieved from the late copper addition of both Chinook and Cascade hops, giving it a citrus aroma and taste. A good balance between sweetness and bitterness gives this beer a full and complete flavour.'

The Three Horseshoes

Wistow

Gerry, Julia and Nick invite you to their traditional village pub.



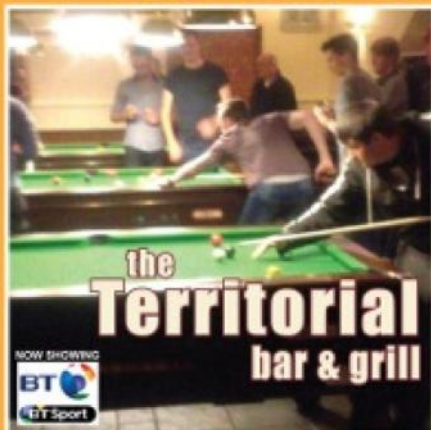
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Pub Pieces

What's On in Your Local? Reports in Pub Pieces are provided by our branch pub contacts, licensees, local CAMRA members and Opening Times readers. Further news of changes at local pubs is welcome. Please send news to news@huntscamra.org.uk

Huntingdonshire District council has granted planning permission to extend the **Manchester Arms** in **St Ives** for conversion



to a retail development, despite objections from Huntingdonshire CAMRA, St Ives Town Council, town

centre traders and local residents. In its objections, CAMRA cited national planning guidance that requires planners to take account of the importance of pubs and other facilities to local communities when a change of use is proposed.

St Ives has seen the development of a massive groundswell of public opposition against the aspirations of pubs group JD Wetherspoon to open a pub in the town. A petition opposing Wetherspoon's plans has been gathering hundreds of signatures in St Ives pubs and other businesses.

A number of local politicians have been prominent in their condemnation of the plans, citing fears of the likely effect on trade at existing town pubs, some of which are already struggling to maintain their levels of business under difficult trading conditions.

The St Ives Civic Society has also voiced its concerns. Many of the town's pubs operate in historic listed buildings that could be threatened by the plans, as illustrated by

the ongoing situation at the Grade II listed **Falcon** in **Huntingdon**.

The 'Save the Falcon' group has rekindled its campaign to rescue the **Falcon** after the pull-out of a potential buyer for the Huntingdon pub which has been closed since 2008. The group, set up by Faye Linell via a Face-



book page over two years ago, is now considering setting up a charitable trust known as a Building Preservation Trust - it is hoped that such a trust could sub-let the pub from lease holders Spirit Pub Company. The group is also hoping to attract funding from English Heritage and looking for people with relevant experience in areas such

as project management, PR, web site design and the hospitality business, to join the group by contacting save.tfh@gmail.com or visiting the Facebook page by searching 'Save the Falcon'. There have been concerns about a lack of maintenance and the 'Save Britain's Heritage' organisation has included the Falcon on its annual register of buildings at risk. In March 2011 Huntingdonshire District Council enforced urgent repairs of damage caused by a burst water tank in the building. The lease is being marketed by Fleurets.

Opening Times has received a report that the **Plough** in **Eynesbury** has been taken over by the same developers who were involved in the housing development that replaced the nearby Merry Boys pub in 2011.

Pub Pieces



The tenants of Charles Wells's **Cambridge-shire Hunter** in Eynesbury are reported to be in the process of additionally taking on Greene King pub the **Old Sun** in Eaton Socon.

A planning application for the **White Hart** at **Bythorn** has been lodged. Part of the building is to be retained for use as a pub, with the remainder converted to residential use. CAMRA is asking planners to consider the potential viability of the pub premises if reduced in size as the plan envisages.



Real ale has been spotted in two outlets that did not offer cask beer previously: Charles Wells pub the **Territorial** in Huntingdon and the **Slepe Hall Hotel** on Ramsey Road in St Ives.



The **Anchor** at **Little Paxton** will house the village post office, subject to the outcome of a six-week consultation by the Post

Office Ltd that ended in September. The village post office on St James Road closed in December 2012.

The **Tavern on the Green, Abbotsley**, which has been closed since 2009, is now displaying "sold" signs, and fencing has

been placed around the car park.



Potton beers have been on sale in rotation at the **Lion** in **Buckden**. Also in Buckden, A range of Draycott real ales in

bottle is stocked at the bar at **Buckden Marina**.



A number of local pubs are currently for sale. Enterprise Inns are offering the freehold of the **Hyde Park, St. Neots** for £300,000. A temporary manager is currently running the pub.

The tenancy of the **Black Bull, Godmanchester** is also advertised as available.



The **Dragon** in **Brampton** was recently closed for a short time following the departure of the last tenants, but has now reopened, with David Hall as temporary manager. The pub has also started to serve meals again, concentrating on traditional pub food with starters from £3.50 to £4.00 and mains from £6.50 to £10.00. Charles Wells are advertising for new tenants and viewings have already started. In the meantime the Dragon is selling Charles Wells

Pub Pieces

Eagle and Bombardier, with a guest beer on the horizon, for when trade improves.

The **Pear Tree** at **Bassingbourn** has been purchased by two local businessmen, Nigel Howard and David Chamberlain. The pub has been extensively refurbished, and the owners hope that the pub will reopen as the **Belle** at the end of November. The pub's new name commemorates the famous B17 bomber which was stationed at Bassingbourn. The pub will be run by Chef and Manager Richard King, who has moved from the Fox and Hounds, Barley.

The **Three Tuns**, **Guilden Morden** has been purchased from Greene King by a local business woman who runs an interior design business in



Steeple Morden. The Three Tuns became available for purchase when the six-month moratorium period of its Asset of Community Value (ACV) listing came to an end. The new owner of the pub has not yet decided what she intends to do with the building.



The six-month moratorium period on the

Queen Adelaide at **Croydon** also recently came to an end, and the owners immediately offered the pub at auction, with an asking price of £300,000, but there were no bidders. It is understood that the pub will be offered at auction again, this time in London, presumably to attempt to attract a larger audience of potential bidders.



been approached by Enterprise Inns and asked to take on the **Rose and Crown**, **Somersham**. The pub has been extensively refurbished by Enterprise, and will reopen on November 5th. Four real ales will be offered, two more than previously, and the initial range is likely to be Fuller's London Pride, a beer from Adnams, and two rotating guest beers. The Rose and Crown will be run as a community-focussed pub with real pub food. It had been closed for over a year and there was increasing concern over its future.

The team who run both the White Horse, Eaton Socon and the Vine, Buckden have

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Pub of the Year 2008
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Pub of the Year 2006

Events and Socials

November 2013

Tue 5th Open Committee Meeting, **White Horse, Eaton Socon** (20:30). All welcome.

Fri 15th Pub Quiz, **Hyde Park, St Neots** (20:30). Are you a know-it-all or merely a trivia fiend? Either way come along to the Hyde Park in St Neots on Friday 15th November and join in our autumn general knowledge quiz. It's free to take part so what have you got to lose? The fun starts at 8.30pm on the dot. Teams – maximum of 4 people. Open to members and non-members and there will be prizes!

December 2013

Fri 6th Walking tour of pubs in **St Neots** (20:30). Further details will be published on the website in due course.

Tue 10th Open Committee Meeting, **White Hart, Great Staughton** (20:30). All welcome.

January 2014

Tue 14th Open Committee Meeting, **King of the Belgians, Huntingdon** (20:30). All welcome.

Fri 24th Christmas social, **Chequers, Little Gransden** (20:30).

February 2014

Tue 11th Open Committee Meeting, **Lion Hotel, Buckden** (20:30). All welcome.

Sat 22th Coach trip to visit pubs in the southern part of our branch area.

An up to date listing of social events can be found on the web site:
www.huntscamra.org.uk/diary, or contact the social secretary, Varina Howell.

Opening Times

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Editor: Andy Shaw, 01480 355893 (h), 07802 485449 (m),
news@huntscamra.org.uk, 13a Peppercorns Lane, Eaton Socon, St Neots, PE19 8HL.

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Who to Contact

Chairman: Richard Harrison,
07740 675712 (m),
chairman@huntscamra.org.uk

Secretary: Ray London, 01480 390135
(h), secretary@huntscamra.org.uk.

Treasurer: Andy Blagbrough, 01480
810756 (h), treasurer@huntscamra.org.uk

Social Secretary: Varina Howell, 01480
351661 (h), socials@huntscamra.org.uk.

Membership Secretary: Margaret Eames, 01480 385333 (h)

Pubs Info: Roy Endersby,
01480 473364, pubs@huntscamra.org.uk

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